



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

February 24, 2004

Mr. Mitch Demientieff
Chairman, Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
3601 C Street, Suite 1030
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

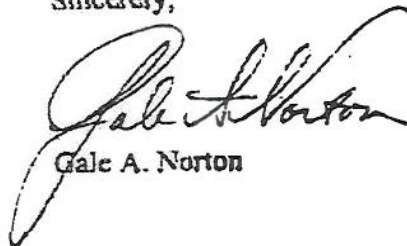
Dear Mr. Demientieff:

Enclosed is my response to Governor Murkowski's letter of July 17, 2003, requesting that I appoint a representative from the State of Alaska to serve as a non-voting member to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board). With the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, I have accepted the Board's recommendation. I would be pleased to receive the name of the Governor's nominee as liaison to the Board, as opposed to a non-voting member.

The Secretary of Agriculture and I acknowledge the sovereign role of the State of Alaska in the management of fish and wildlife resources. We are committed to working with the Governor and State officials to coordinate and manage an effective and efficient subsistence program. We expect the Board to work closely with the State in a cooperative manner that will maximize everyone's involvement and guarantee that the subsistence program is operating efficiently and effectively. We fully expect that the Chairman will recognize the State for comment on any issue related to the coordinated regulation of fish and wildlife resources.

My decision to appoint a State liaison to the Board will enhance our ability to cooperate and coordinate with the State, and in doing so facilitate a stronger and more successful subsistence program for the mutual benefit of all users.

Sincerely,



Gale A. Norton

Enclosure



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February 24, 2004

The Honorable Frank H. Murkowski
Governor of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Murkowski:

Since your initial request that I appoint a representative from the State of Alaska to serve as a non-voting member of the Federal Subsistence Board (Board), I asked the present Board members for a recommendation. The public was given an opportunity to comment on the request before the Board rendered their recommendation. My approach to consideration of your request was guided by the Four C's: Communication, Consultation, and Cooperation, all in the service of Conservation. At the heart of the Four C's is my belief that for conservation and administrative actions to be successful, the federal government must involve the people who live and work on the land. And in that spirit, I would be pleased to receive the name of the nominee to the State liaison to the Board.

This appointment would be consistent with the April 1992 Record of Decision (ROD) for the *Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska Environmental Impact Statement*. Consistent with the ROD, the State liaison, along with ten Regional Advisory Council (RAC) chairs, will serve as active consultants to the Board, but will not have a vote in Board decisions or participate in executive sessions. During Board proceedings, prior to a motion, State and RAC liaisons will fully participate and be recognized by the Chair when they want to ask questions, raise concerns, and/or provide additional information or clarification. Once a motion is made, the liaisons may be invited to participate in Board deliberations or may be recognized by the Chair when they want to ask questions or provide additional information or clarification. The Board's Meeting Guidelines have been amended to reflect these principles.

I have reminded the Federal Subsistence Board of my Four C's inclusive approach to decision making. Both the Secretary of Agriculture and I acknowledge the sovereign role of the State of Alaska in the management of fish and game in Alaska. We fully expect that the Chairman will recognize the State for comment on any issue related to the coordinated regulation of fish and wildlife resources.

The Board enjoys a good working relationship with the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, as well as the Alaska State Board of Fish and Board of Game. While not officially designated as liaisons to the Board, representatives from the State of Alaska Department of Fish

and Game have routinely attended and participated in Board meetings and have provided valuable input and recommendations. The Board also appreciates how the State Boards of Fish and Game, local fish and game advisory committees, the Federal RACs, and the federal and State staffs have worked together to resolve issues. I anticipate that the appointment of an official State liaison to the Board structure will help clarify State perspectives on issues and provide policy input that may not have been provided in the past.

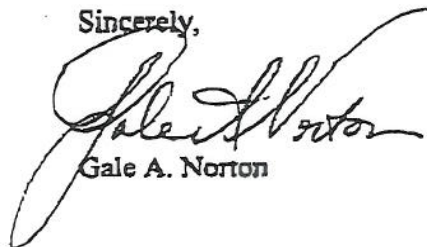
In safeguarding Alaska's fish and game resources and the use of those resources, the State of Alaska and the federal government have differing roles but share some objectives and responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior are two-fold: (1) to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations and (2) to ensure that the taking of fish and wildlife on federal public lands for subsistence use is afforded a priority over other consumptive uses. The State bears primary responsibility for management of fish and game on the lands and waters of Alaska, ensuring sustained yield of the resources and providing for an array of uses including subsistence, personal use, sport, and commercial harvests. Given the differing roles but shared objectives of the two sovereigns, it is important to coordinate regulation of fish and wildlife resources. I anticipate that the appointment of an official State liaison to work with the Federal Subsistence Board will increase cooperation between the State and federal agencies, thereby facilitating efforts to assure conservation and provide for use of the resources.

Although the State has the ability to propose a formal rulemaking to establish a non-voting State seat on the Board, we are optimistic this approach will provide the same benefits. The liaison role has this advantage: it can be accomplished quickly, without the necessity of formal rule-making.

The Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provides administrative support for the Federal Subsistence Board. Mr. Thomas H. Boyd in the Office of Subsistence Management will provide the State liaison, once nominated and officially appointed, with orientation materials and additional information. Mr. Boyd can be reached at 907-786-3864.

I greatly appreciate your interest in providing a liaison to the Board and look forward to the State's valuable participation in the federal Subsistence Management program.

Sincerely,



Gale A. Norton

Enclosure